

## *The Mechanical and the Artful in the Greek Concept of Craft: Techne*

Howard Cannatella

Undergraduate Programme Leader

Institute of Work Based Learning

Middlesex University

02084116118

hcannatella@mdx.ac.uk

### **Introduction**

My intention is to discuss in a reconstructive manner some well established notions about how the Greeks defined craft and the role of the craft producer in their society in artisan ways. I present two sides: the artistic and the technical. This means that I will be debating some of the knowledge claims that qualified for the Greeks the craft person's expertise, the teaching of craft activity, and what constituted craft production as art. Expounded is the Greek idea that craft is *techne*.

In the literature of the subject the idea that *techne* means art and craft is rarely spoken about. No equivalent word today captures this meaning. On first view *techne* appears like a conundrum. When the mechanical and the artistic are different in kind what deeds bring them together according to *techne* theory? How indeed does *techne* activity operate with art and craft in mind? While Aristotle gets close to answering this problem, Plato was noting some of the differences and difficulties that *techne* has and in a manner not unbecoming of him, he interjects an ironic tone when he refers to the craft person as "amazingly clever" (Plato, 1997, p.1200). No cheap insult is being made. Irony in the hands of Plato is masterfully conceived.

To help me, the claim that I am relying upon, which I have taken from Hegel, is that because there are differences between mechanical and artistic thinking, if

craft activity is to be construed as artistic too, the craft activity must be equally grounded in the nature of art itself; which means for Hegel that craft activity has to be “shaped into beauty by art” (Hegel, 1988, Vol.II, p.633). Hegel’s idea of art as beauty involves the ethical, traditional, rational and the subjective. Of course, craft activity is present in most forms of art activity and vice versa. What is unusual, however, is how a building like the Greek Parthenon at Athens managed to create a certain kind of architecture whose art and craft production turned out to be a landmark. This building, we would agree, vindicates the use of the Greek word *techne* to mean art and craft. We admire in equal measure its art and craft and moreover, like the Greeks, we veer away from thinking that its art starts here and craft ends there. Have the Greeks then taught us a valuable lesson? A lesson that in different ways the North American Haida have also taught. In reality the picture was different. The production of Greek *techne* activity from the doctors, ship captains, sculptors and shoe makers, shows that in practice *techne* was being interpreted in divergent ways.

The Greek idea of *techne* is important since they were the first to formulate *techne* activity that by and large has not been surpassed, looking at it from a theoretical point of view. Modern theory and practice in craft education has moved on as we would expect it to but we are all well aware of the need to contrast and compare positions of high rank and importance. In our discussions, the past can be very absent when we focus purely on the present. I will argue that the ability to teach craft education successfully involves thinking about craft activity in mechanical and artistic ways.

We know that craft activity is a predetermined operation but the rebuttable would then be that no amount of craft activity so construed could produce art. R.G. Collingwood makes this point abundantly clear in his work, *The Principles of Art*. Hegel, on the other hand, mentions that craft activity can be reconciled to art activity when craft activity “is brought to life by a content of spiritual individuality (Hegel, 1988, Vol. I, p.85). What I think Hegel is suggesting from a Greek perspective is how character and pathos in art and craft activity hitherto learnt how to develop in the universal the particular to represent the beautiful. How important an idea is this?

As self-enclosed and contained the rules were for Greek craft activity, there were many artist-craft people who never lost sight of the fact that they could individualise, in more precise sensuous ways, the human emotional life that they brought into their work to express the beautiful.

One of the major principles of Hegel's theory of art is how art represents our desire for self-determination and how art expresses freely our thoughts and emotional experiences. Art, Hegel construes, must synthesise, however, the universal within it. Even so, the difficulty for craft production, as Richard Winfield mentions in relation to Hegel's thinking, is how to include art that would not be "incidental to its aesthetic worth" (Winfield, 2000, p.97)?

Now the problem with some theoretical points of view is in the way they can emphasize the universal over the particular or the particular over the universal. Hegel questioned just how far the notion of universality could take from the particular and still possess that weight in production of aesthetic inner life. Subjectivity, he rightly pronounced, is essential to art practice construing it as the "living movement and activity as human passion, action and adventure, and, in general the wide range of human feeling, willing, and neglect" (Hegel, 1988, Vol. I, p.86). Neglect is a cleverly used word and Hegel employs it in two ways: the neglect of a self that does not realise the importance of their subjectivity in life and the counter hypothesis that subjectivity neglects objectivity.

Aristotle clearly thought that the universal and the particular were involved in craft production, but maintained that the essence of craft was caused by its universality. I believe that Aristotle was right in his understanding of the universal for craft activity but naive in his understanding of the particular for craft activity. Hegel saw the inward aspect of art activity as potential stimulation for craft activity. As we will see, to be good at craft work requires both universality and particularity to be met in the mechanical and the artistic.

Craft production in the arts have always involved a "moving 'pathos'" (Hegel, 1988, Vol. I, p.236), an aesthetic imaginatively interpreting the craft's definite end in view. Artistic spirit, Hegel expounds, is what beautifies craft work. Similar to other traditions, the specific qualities of Greek craft work emerged from a culture steeped in beliefs. The subject matter of their art was aiming to reproduce those forms which expressed their pleasures, ethics, religion, politics, freedoms and tragedy appropriate to an intellectual and sensuous production of work "in the shape of phenomena possessed of external reality" (Hegel, 1988, Vol. I, p.41). Craft activity enabled the Greeks to individualise their existence, to cement in gesture, poetry, colour, proportion, decoration and symbol, what their world meant to them.

There is a debt we owe to this Greek tradition that concerns a philosophy which recognised that “the end of every [craft] activity is conformity to a corresponding state” (Aristotle, 1984, p.1761) and an “individual living attitude” (Hegel 1988, Vol. II, p.988) with its own touch involved. You cannot have one without the other. The elements of contriving and measured accuracy are at work in craft activity. This was a Greek world that idealised those principles of form and content which manifested craft production. Pragmatically, the principles of craft production are of concern to us because craft teaching fosters technical correctness with a common consistent effect. Similar to other craft traditions, for the Greeks it simply was not good enough to stop at technical correctness and universality. Craft activity as art meant expressing the specific mood or message of a thing moderated through the vision of the craft person’s own account of it.

These Greeks were men and women of ideas. They believed in the necessity of craft activity because craft activity served their desire to see themselves as rational, loving and proud. Here pursued is craft activity in the visual arts sense, one that resounded with the glaring manifestation of a spirit whose inner subjectivity of its objectivised world, determined the sympathy of craft work. Contemporary craft teaching might therefore find that there is educational value in this reconstruction.

### **The Origins and Meaning of Techne Activity**

R. G. Collingwood (1958, p.15) states that the word techne for the Greeks was synonymous with art and craft. Now the fact that the Greeks made no distinction between art and craft is a useful one to remember if for no other reason than many sculptors, painters, ceramists, designers, architects, builders, poets, dramatists, musicians, dancers and actors might still see themselves as having a foot in both camps. It is not however, only a matter of having a foot in both camps, but that the production of techne activity may often involve art and craft activity in a complete way. But if techne was synonymous with art and craft this does not mean that art for the Greeks was not distinguishable from techne as Plato thought in Book Ten of *Republic*. Despite Plato’s understandable reservations of it, Aristotle saw the technical as having a greater role in art.

According to David Roochnik, *techne* descended from the Indo-European root word of ‘tek’, meaning to fit together two parts of a building. Roochnik tells us that “in its pre-Homeric meaning, [techne] came to refer to the knowledge or skill of the *tektōn*, he who produces something from wood” (Roochnik, 1990, p.19). Plato talked about the craftsmen as a cabinet maker. In its original meaning *techne* refers to making and building.

Homer’s account of *techne* in his *Iliad* leaves one with the impression that production is a bitter-sweet art. Bitter-sweet because as Martha Nussbaum mentions in *The Fragility of Goodness* life has a way of striking back, however well planned the craft method is. No amount of armour protects Achilles, even though it was the Greek God of craft, Prometheus, who created for Achilles’ his famous armour. Homer’s description of Achilles’ armour further draws our attention to the refined way the armour was made. Those who fought the same battles as Achilles admired Prometheus’ workmanship and believed the armour was special because of it. We all admire things that are well-made. A well-made object is something to admire.

In contrast to Homer’s portrayal of craft activity, there were the Hippocratic writings. *Techne* in the Hippocratic writings refers to the rational, necessary and systematic order of science in medicine. Of all the Greek *tektōn*’s writings that we have remaining today it is the ‘doctors’ theses of their art that has been extensively preserved. Hence, while the Greek word for art and craft was *techne* there is truth in Serafina Cuomo’s remark that the meaning of *techne* for the Greeks, “depends on whom you ask” (Cuomo, 2007, p.40). The Hippocratic Corpus and James Allen’s paper *Failure and Expertise in the Ancient Conception of an Art* are two expositions of *techne* as a science whose stories are very different from the poetic way Homer’s or Polykleitos’ understood *techne*.

Modernism brought in a radical break to the meaning of *techne*. Martin Heidegger in his paper *The Question Concerning Technology* remarks that although the word technology stems from the Greek word *technikon*, a word which is derived from *techne*, and from the Greek word *logy* meaning subject of study, in its modern sense technology means not craft but techno-science. Technology is a 17<sup>th</sup> century word and means applied science or mechanical art.

*Techne* has been usurped by technology. Techno-science has always been an important aspect of *techne* but technology has never been as dominant as it has

culturally now become. Where once *techne* served a strong social, functional, spiritual and aesthetic need, and still does in many aboriginal communities, it epitomises now technological production. We have neither a use for the word *techne* nor an understanding of the meaning of it that is practical in our modern world. We should not be surprised by these changes from *techne* to technology given what the word means. Society changes and so does our vocabulary. Changes in vocabulary result in changes in meaning. The more the *tektōn* realised what they could produce by refining their mechanical operations, rules, principles and methods, the less dependent on art activity they became. Paradoxically, though, technology has to some extent fallen into the same trap that Hegel predicted of art: vanity and presentism. What technology erased was not just the separation of art from craft but a discourse that once had the power to transform society through art.

This paper is less concerned with the immense importance of techno-science, and more concerned with *techne* as meaning art and craft. As suggested in my introduction, my focus is on craft making as it relates to the artist, builder, designer and craft worker.

## **Defining Techne**

Roochnik remarks that “during the late fifth and early fourth centuries a wide-ranging debate was taking place about the nature, limit and epistemic character of *techne*” (Roochnik, 1996, p.43). In these debates and at the forefront of it were physicians like Hippocrates and Eryximachus, philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, and art-craft persons like Polykleitos and Sophocles. The debate that was going on involved asking questions like: if *techne* exists, what is its activity; what is its subject matter, function and end?

Why does Aristotle define craft activity as a “definite science” (Aristotle, 1984, p.2153)? The theory supposed that craft activity is based on rational principles. One idea that seemed to support this view was how Aristotle noted that craft activity appeared systematically determined; it involved the projection of methods.

Under the notion that craft activity was universal, the craft’s art must, Aristotle thought, be subject to a well-governed state. Craft activity had rules that served the craft’s function and end. Rules about craft activity, Collingwood maintains

in his *Principles of Art*, only go to show, as previously mentioned, how craft activity is a long way off from being a true art.

Collingwood defines the Greek idea of *techne* as “the power to produce a preconceived result by means of consciously controlled and directed action” (1958, p.15). Not unreasonably, Collingwood correctly draws the conclusion that the Greek notion of craft was a: ‘technical theory of art’. The claim that craft is a ‘technical theory of art’ has many educational advantages.

It is as well to bear in mind that the Greek concept of craft as so stated by Collingwood’s excellent definition, represents at best only half the story we are about to tell. In the final part of this paper a Hegelian account of the Greek ideal of the beautiful in craft work is explored. Hegel’s account cannot be subsumed by Collingwood’s Greek ‘technical theory of art’. Collingwood like Hegel never saw art as craft but Hegel did argue as I have remarked, that architecture could “reshape the purely useful into beauty” (Hegel, 1988, Vol. II, P.660). For now, let us accept the meaning of craft as a technical theory of art.

Robert Hall concludes in relation to Plato’s *Gorgias* that for Socrates, “the function of the craftsman is to bring to completion his activity with the production of the object of art” (Hall, 1971, p.203). Put this statement alongside Collingwood’s “the power to produce a preconceived result by means of consciously controlled and directed action”, and we have a fair technical definition of what Greek art and craft as *techne* means. By now the reader may have begun to note that technical rules are not moral rules.

### **Craft as a Technical Theory of Art and its Knowledge Claim**

As a theory, craft as *techne* acquired its meaning in Greek philosophy, notably from Plato and Aristotle’s work. As we will see, Plato and Aristotle explained many of the general characteristics of craft activity that Collingwood hitherto extrapolates (a noted example that Collingwood may have drawn from can be found in Plato’s *Gorgias*, 1997, p.848).

Few would disagree with Collingwood’s Greek notion of craft because it expresses, all told, *techne*. A rational systematic approach is at the heart of *techne*. Collingwood’s definition, however, needs unpacking because it hides from view, why rules and recipes, for example, are educationally useful. At face value, Collingwood’s definition could well be misconstrued.

We are in a position to take stock of Collingwood's definition and draw a sketch of what the inherent criteria might be for craft activity.

- 1. An art**
- 2. Technical expertise**
- 3. Production**

In this sketch, our criteria attempts to answer what the Greek idea of *techne* involves. As a criteria list for craft activity it really is not that bad at all. It represents a lot of craft ground in the visual, literary and performing arts sense, representing a familiar understanding of the elements of craft construction. The criteria is generic in the sense that whether you were a doctor, ship's captain, sculptor or poet in Greek society, the *tektōn* combined these skills in a single body of work. This list is important because art, technical expertise, and production are the nuclei of any craft activity. They are typical universal entities across all craft areas. Of course, this list explains nothing specifically useful for guidance in any *techne* activity. I am being very simplistic. I have deliberately ignored the particular situations that will have a marked affect on how such criteria are used. It is inconceivable in craft activity not to be informed by situations, functions and ends.

Whatever else is constant in teaching craft activity, one has to pay attention to these three fundamental principles and the way they are embodied "in a rule and the rule in a socially established practice (MacIntyre, 2002, p.47). In a manner slightly reminiscent of Wittgenstein, MacIntyre goes on to indicate that it is practice which vindicates criteria because practice reveals the concrete and particular reality of the application of such criteria, the possibilities of it. Yet the craft of the *tektōn*'s activity with its governing criteria is premised on general problems and solutions, but out in the field, on site, in a studio or in a classroom, the real problem becomes how to translate the crafts ideas and norms in actionable ways appropriate and meaningful to the given situation and anticipated consequences (MacIntyre, 2002, p.93). As relevant as our stated criteria are without a structured methodology to their use how could the craft person secure their end and control the nature of their outcome?

By production, I mean making and putting into action (Roochnik, 1996, p.26). We determine the success of any craft work by what it demonstrates via its production. In a theatre, studio or concert hall, musicians and dancers will demonstrate by their performance the extent of their craft's productive

knowledge. If we look again at Collingwood's quoted technical theory of art, craft activity is a preconceived, controlled and organised operation. Dancers and musicians follow planned sequences and procedures. They deploy routine exercises in controlled ways.

Our technical debate is further fuelled with rational principles in mind by the doctors, who argued that the medical *tektōn* must distinguish between different procedures and observe what the correct diagnosis and action would be in each case (Hippocratic Writings, 1983, p.141). Different principles guide different crafts (Hippocratic Writings, 1983, p.146) and as Aristotle surmises, do "not look for precision in all things alike, but in each class of things such precision as accords with the subject-matter, and so much as is appropriate to the [occasion and function]" (Aristotle, 1984, pp. 1735-6). When a ceramicist produces a bowl or a furniture maker a chair what is produced relates to their art, but this art in *techne* activity has a function and end where any number of standardised construed criteria may be involved to determine the work's skill and its purpose.

However well planned *techne* is, it is far from straightforward; never without numerous personal observations, experimentations and reflections. When we say that the craft activity is organised, based on rational principles, is skilful, functional, has an end and is universal, just how it answers these claims in a coherent and satisfying action way involves a more rounded, passionate and connecting view of life. Imagination, will, interest, moral obligation, experience and excellence in production are surely every bit a force in the constructing process as anything procedural. Without this susceptibility what kind of expanding and enriching act of production will the craft activity be? A check list will not suffice as effective teaching as Joseph Dunne partly discusses in his work *Back to the Rough Ground*.

A redraft of our criteria might now look like this:

- 1. An art (subject matter)**
- 2. Technical expertise (knowledge)**
- 3. Production**
- 4. Method**
- 5. Use**
- 6. Function and end**
- 7. Reliability and universality**

***8. Ethical implications that are not part of the craft production itself but are nevertheless essential to it***

Having stated in a reductive way what is necessary for craft activity, we find ourselves beginning to realise that the simplicity of our original criteria is dependent upon a more intricate weave of criteria involvement and interaction. In order for techne activity to be technical, it must be skilful, practical and scientific and in order for it to be skilful, practical and scientific the techne process requires method and reliable standards. Ethics is further involved. If the craft does not have a function and an end, we might suppose it cannot be useful because use implies a service that serves a purpose. Craft activity requires a function and an end. Function, end, method, reliability and skill in techne activity are contributing aspects of the craft's epistemic character. The knowledge a craft person has is practical and to be practical their art as craft activity must be useful and productive. What I am signalling by criterion number eight is the impossibility of teaching craft activity in a social setting independent of ethical principles and issues. "Having a right to", having the power to" (MacIntyre, 2007, p.145) and doing the right thing may persuade us that techne is not all that it seems.

The craft person's account must give reasons that support intelligently their actions, an explanation and a justification.

### **Hegel and the Ideal of Beauty in Craft**

Halliwell notes from Aristotle's Ethics that art cannot produce those things that come into being naturally. Art is a contrivance, a fashioning of sorts, a self-constructed and calculating process. In relation to Phidias and Polykleitan's work, Aristotle suggests that art is comprehension combined with knowledge (Aristotle, 1984, p.1801). Whether it is Homer's Iliad or Iktinos and Kallikrates architectural works at the Acropolis in Athens, the arts involve techne. Each piece of Greek art/craft is schemed. An actor's facial expression in a play has to express the right kind of gesture in it and be "determined by the ends or purpose towards whose fulfilment they move" (Halliwell, 1998, p.48).

The techne aspect comes through Aristotle thinking further when he surmises that a play is composed of "primary distinctions" (Aristotle, 1984, p.2317).

How often is it the case that the genera of a play will regulate the craft work's representation and realism in it? The class of a thing matters in art. A genus like tragedy has a vocabulary that explores fear, pity and moral standing which Aristotle says is part of the formative and rule element of drama. Whatever 'this' tragedy is about the genera that it belongs to is the constancy for it.

Our Greek literary, architectural and sculptural pieces all involved what Aristotle refers to as "first principles" (Aristotle, 1984, 2316): what anyone would have to know about first if they wanted to produce a tragedy, comedy or produce a life size boxer in Bronze like the *Terme Boxer* of the 3-2<sup>nd</sup> BC. Hegel mentions how the Greek "artist had to keep to specific forms and repeat their type" (Hegel's 1988, Vol. II, p.722). There is unity, symmetry, measurement and order in Sophocles' *Antigone* as there is in the Greek statue of Aphrodite of Melos, and the producers of these works show that they know their subject matter, their history, their general truths and their audience.

Greek craft activity was concerned with how to produce in works of art the spectacle of human relationships but only as Aristotle mentions in "the right way" (Aristotle, 1984, p.2326). The sculptor, who produced the *Terme Boxer*, did so knowing 'in the right way' how to represent their community feeling for a boxer. The repose of the boxer mattered to the Greeks. Content and subject matter had to be sympathetic to requirements. When shaped by rules, techne activity permits no arbitrary arrangement: "[t]heir spears stood upright, butt-end upon the ground"; for that was the usual way of fixing them then, as it is still with the Illyrians" (Aristotle, 1984, Vol. II, p.2338). Craft production was reasoned and conceptually thought through.

The mathematical art of geometry employed in the construction of the buildings at the Acropolis at Athens related to the idea of Greek beauty. A reoccurring technical quality of these buildings that was repeatedly used was the ratio of 9:4. Mathematics skills helped perfect a type of building activity that emphasised a unitary notion in design by synthesizing the ratio governing the vertical and horizontal proportions of their public buildings. Common in public building construction was how the height of columns had a relation to the column's diameter and span of the building. The Parthenon at Athens had eight columns at the front and 17 columns along its sides. Pythagoras' theory was used to "delimit the height and the spacing of columns" (Herbert, 1985, p.24). "Greek architects knew the art of measuring with shadows. The north-south axis was marked by the shortest shadow cast by the sun's zenith. The problem

was to trace the perpendicular, the holy east-west direction” (Herbert, 1985, p.24). Measured accuracy in the activity of craft work was more than a technical pursuit, it was an aesthetic requirement and an ethical ideal. With creative intent, Polykleitan is thought to have calculated the positioning of every angle, muscle and gesture in his sculptures. He technically executed a variety of sculptured schematised figures as Greek ethical ideal forms whose vision depicted a vitality that reflected their lives and imagination.

The techniques of building and sculpturing had to express Greek subject matter in a felt way linking the art work’s expression to an acceptable schema of it. Set themes never stopped the Greek artist, as Hegel intimates, from expressing the pathos of their own concrete experience, the transformation of form, gesture and line to shape the fixed human character of their representations. Greek architecture corresponds, Hegel notes to the symbolic form of art, an art that is an “abstract harmony between meaning and shape” (Hegel, 1988, Vol. I, p.300), the result of content and form filled with a “universality that is particularised within itself” (Hegel, 1988, Vol. I, p.301).

Hegel asserted that the mannerist way Greek craft activity was produced enabled universal beliefs to be particularised in concrete ways. Art/craft activity of this magnitude was of the highest public importance, “a living need” (Hegel, 1998, Vol. II, p.764) for the Greeks. This was an art/craft activity that discovered by technical, imaginative and conceptual means how to represent an ideal spirit “shaped for sensuous imagination and intuition and acting and completing itself in its manifestation (Hegel, 1988, Vol.1, p.236). To be clear, what Hegel is claiming is that the ideal of beauty is synonymous with the activity of art and that art represents the most complete expression of beauty. He thought that the capturing of the Greek ideal spirit was nothing short of an elevated and productive form of art/craft: vital, intellectual and substantive.

Hegel acknowledges that art activity incorporates the unfettered enlivenment of our own fancies. Unlike craft activity, art activity is a phenomena too wrapped up, he surmised, in its own imaginative thoughts and feelings. It can soften the world, heighten life and give pleasure because Hegel claims aesthetic being penetrates and shapes what freedom desires: beauty, truth and the good. This freedom, Hegel further construes, is also why art can fail, producing nothing more than frivolity and superficiality. Art as freedom, Hegel asserts, overreaches itself.

The argument that Hegel makes, therefore, against the idea of *techne*, is this: (1) universality is designed to create rules of artistic production which in turn standardises production in order to produce everything in the same manner. (2) *Techne* is a rule providing theory, where formal, regular, and mechanical solutions are sought. Everything is cut-and-dried and largely error free. A superimposed world was just as problematic for Hegel as a free, unreflective, and self-indulgent world. Rule procedures and production techniques that prescribe what is to be done precisely, do so in relation to specifications that require little feeling, subjectivity and freedom, but rather, Hegel says abstraction and generalization.

The Hegelian belief is that “artistic production is not a formal activity” (Hegel, 1988, Vol. I, p.26), nor mere presentation either. Artistic activity must “advance towards establishing the particular, which is principally what is at issue” (Hegel, 1988, Vol.1, p.15) in art. His analysis is that formality cannot produce artistic spiritual activity. The artist/craft person must be capable of creating an individual production. *Techne* produces only external circumstances which is quite different, Hegel feels, from artistic production which invites internal personal thoughts and reflections to shape the particularity of its sensuous and idealised production. What is produced comes from the artist’s own resources. But it is not any kind of artistic production as Brian Etter mentions: “for Hegel: it is the sensuous representation of truth” (Etter, 2000, p.41). Yet for art/craft to have the concreteness of beauty, truth and reality represented sensuous form it must have a “specific content, the material corresponding to that content, and the artistic treatment conditioned thereby” (Hegel, 1988, Vol. II, pp.798-9). Artistic production in its freedom expresses in contingent ways the more vital and mature form of a humanity bound by its cheerfulness, innocence, seriousness, tragedy, and irony. Hegel’s perspective, as Etter goes on to say, recognises the “validity of transcendence and tradition” (Etter, 2000, p.41). Hegel admired art traditions because such traditions he saw as part of the identity and moralizing human concern of a community. Bill Reid’s *The Raven and the First Men* (1980) and Jean-Francois Millet’s *The Gleaners* (1857) are cases in point.

The true impulse of art, Hegel says, is the freedom to express. A building, painting, vase, dance, music or play must rest earnestly with one’s own personal feeling for its depth. Art/craft production is part of a tradition whose content in practical ways is inseparable from how the activity expresses the specific shape

of a head, a nose, a hand, the movement of the body, a physical space or the language used to discuss love modified by personal experience; a repose that is individually appropriate to its occasion.

For craft work to be thinking in artistic ways it has to be thinking subjectively. Subjectivity is the fundamental principle of artistic activity. External sensuous shape must have a content and subject matter as substantial to “the universal moments of the idea of beauty” (Hegel, 1988, Vol. I, p.90). A pathos that is appropriate to “universality particularizes within itself” (Hegel, 1988, Vol. I, p.301). So that, even the function of a building that has to be utilitarian, displays in its unity a passion that has grace in its representation. An architect has to interpret in a strikingly independent fashion with moral feeling, how to transform a building’s functionality in a pleasurable life giving way. Consummating moral, technical and aesthetic thought/actions hint at how craft activity unifies the useful into the beautiful. While buildings are designed for specific purposes “the product of the human intellect has no direct model” (Hegel, 1988, Vol.2, p.662). Art/craft “cannot simply re-present given content, but must *transfigure* whatever it presents so that the form of its appearance is uniquely tied to its content” (Winfield, 2000, p.98).

The abiding value of craft activity becomes therefore a particular kind of beauty and the ideas that relate to it have, for Hegel, come from symbolic, classical and romantic conceptions. Beauty, he says, is “something inward, a content, and something outward which signifies that content; the inner shines in the outer and makes itself known through the outer” (Hegel, 1988, Vol. I, p.20). It is the content which makes art/craft intelligible, “it manifests something beyond sensuousness, the thought or spirit of the artist who created it [and that]...to achieve this is the recognition that particularity is not an obstacle to intelligibility” (Halper, 2000, p.188).

Of course, beauty is not unique to art/craft activity, but art/craft activity must remain faithful to the production of beauty because: “[t]he universal need for art[craft], that is to say, is man’s rational and sensuous need to lift the inner and the outer world into his spiritual consciousness as an object in which he recognises again his own self” (Hegel, 1988, Vol. I, p.31). “[T]hings that move us forward turn at once into figure, drawing, melody, or poem” (Hegel, 1988, Vol. I, p. 41). So “when craft is practiced as a discipline piece of knowledge, it is inevitably an activity of self-exploration in the sense that one learns about oneself through searching for excellence in work” (Dormer, 1997, p.219).

Subject matter, rules, functions, ends and principles either change or die out. As society changes so craft activity changes and while there are many differences between one craft activity and another, notions such as the useful, practical, functional, reliable, good, knowledgeable, teachable, skilful, typical, productive, correct reasoning and the beautiful seem applicable for evaluating the success of any craft activity. We have seen how it is possible to combine the mechanical and the artistic and the Greek idea of how the particular and the universal are to be courted in craft activity with traditional conventions and imaginative embodiment. The Greek understanding of *techne* as art/craft seems to further imply a moral duty between the technical and the artistic. Before we go racing off merely to produce we might hesitate to consider some articulated notion of craft production that has given meaningful expression to its determinate life experience. By combining objectivity and subjectivity in self-conscious ways, the Greeks possessed a refined appreciation of craft work that arguably represents a notion of what world class skills are over and above what Lord Leitch's report surmises they are, for they understood the relevance of an aesthetic, intellectual, practical and moral contemplation of the concept of skill whose ideas are worth considering when we want to form future educational policy decisions.

## References

Allen, J. (1993) *Failure and Expertise in the Ancient Conception of an Art* in A. Janis and T. Horowitz (ed.) *Scientific Failure* (Lanham, Maryland, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers)

Aristotle. (1984) *Nicomachean Ethics* in J. Barnes (ed.) *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. II (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press)

Aristotle. (1984) *Poetics* in J. Barnes (ed.) *The Complete Works of Aristotle* Vol. II.

Aristotle. (1984) *Rhetoric* in J. Barnes (ed.) *The Complete Works of Aristotle* Vol. II.

Collingwood, R.G. (1958) *The Principles of Art* (Oxford, Oxford University Press)

Cuomo, S. (2007) *Technology and Culture in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press)

Dormer, P. (1997) *The Culture of Craft* (Manchester, Manchester University Press)

Dunne, J. (1993) *Back to the Rough Ground* (Indiana, University of Notre Dames Press)

Etter, B. (2000) *Hegel's Aesthetic and the Possibility of Art Criticism* in W. Maker (ed.) *Hegel and Aesthetics* (Oxford, Oxford University Press)

Hall, R. (1971) *Techne and Morality in the Gorgias* in J.P. Anton and G. L. Kustas (ed.) *Essays in Greek Philosophy* (Albany, State University of New York Press).

Halliwell, S. (1998) *Aristotle's Poetics* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press)

Halper, E. (2000) *The Logic of Art: Beauty and Nature* in W. Maker (ed.) *Hegel and Aesthetics* (Oxford, Oxford University Press)

Hegel, G.W.F (1988) *Hegel's Aesthetics Lectures on Fine Art* (trans.) T.M. Knox, Vol.I (Oxford, Clarendon Press)

Hegel, G.W.F (1988) *Hegel's Aesthetics Lectures on Fine Art* (trans.) T.M. Knox, Vol.II (Oxford, Clarendon Press)

Heidegger, M. (2000) *The Question Concerning Technology* in S.F. Krell (ed) *Basic Writings Martin Heidegger* (London, Routledge)

Herbert, Z. (1985) *Barbarian in the Garden* (trans.) M. March and J. Anders (San Diego, A Harvest Book Harcourt Brace and Company)

*Hippocratic Writings* (1983), (ed.) G.E.R. Lloyd (London, Penguin Books)

Leitch, S. (2006) *Review of Skills: Prosperity for all in the Global Economy—World Class Skills* (Norwich, Her Majesty's Stationary Office)

MacIntyre, A. (2007) *A Short History of Ethics* (London, Routledge Classics)

Nussbaum, M. (2001) *The Fragility of Goodness, Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press)

Plato. (1997) *Gorgias* in J.M. Cooper (ed.) *Plato Complete Works* (Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company)

Plato. (1997) *Republic* in J.M. Cooper (ed.) *Plato Complete Works* (Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company)

Roochnik, D. (1996) *Of Art and Wisdom, Plato's Understanding of Techne* (Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press)

Winfield, R. (2000) *The Challenge of Architecture to Hegel's Aesthetics* in W. Maker (ed.) *Hegel and Aesthetics* (Oxford, Oxford University Press)